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Chairman: Mr. Priputen (Vice-Chairman) ..... (Slovakia)

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In the absence of Mr. Belinga-Eboutou (Cameroon), Mr. Priputen (Slovakia), Vice-Chairman, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 10.15 a.m.

Agenda item 110: Advancement of women *(continued)* (A/C.3/58/L.19 and L.22)

1. **Mr. de Barros** (Secretary of the Committee) called the participants' attention to a mistake in resolution A/RES/57/180. Draft resolution A/C.3/57/L.21, submitted to the Committee at the previous session, had been revised orally by its main sponsor, New Zealand. The revision had consisted in deleting preambular paragraph 5 of the draft resolution, which had then been adopted as revised. However, in the text of the draft resolution appearing in the Third Committee report transmitted to the General Assembly under document symbol A/57/549, it was preambular paragraph 6 - instead of 5 - that had been deleted. As a result, resolution A/RES/57/180 did not reflect the agreement reached by the members of the Third Committee.

Draft resolution A/C.3/58/L.19: Improvement of the status of women in the United Nations

2. **Ms. Maillé** (Canada), introducing draft resolution A/C.3/58/L.19 on behalf of Australia, Canada and New Zealand, said that the following countries had become co-sponsors: Belize, Botswana, Brazil, Bulgaria, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cambodia, Chile, China, Colombia, Costa Rica, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Ecuador, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Finland, Guatemala, Italy, Kazakhstan, Latvia, Luxembourg, Madagascar, Malawi, Malta, Namibia, Netherlands, Nicaragua, Peru, Portugal, Republic of Korea, Romania, Spain, Switzerland, Tunisia, Ukraine, United States of America, Uruguay and Venezuela.

3. Three years after the target year 2000 set at the Fourth World Conference on Women for meeting the goal of gender equality in the United Nations system, the situation had not changed noticeably. Between 1998 and 2003, almost no progress had been made in the rate of representation of women in appointments of one year or more at the professional and higher levels.

4. The executive heads of the organizations of the United Nations system were therefore encouraged to intensify their efforts to meet the goal of gender balance as soon as possible. The Secretary-General's comprehensive review of progress made toward gender equality to the Fifth Committee was awaited with great interest.

5. The resolution before the Committee reminded Member States that they could do a number of things to assist the United Nations to meet the goal of gender parity, such as identifying women candidates for positions in the various organizations of the United Nations system. The high representation of women in the International Criminal Court after the latest elections to that body showed that it was possible to tackle the issue successfully.

6. Australia, Canada and New Zealand were pleased to note that at the current session the traditional report submitted by the Secretary-General to the Commission on the Status of Women had become a verbal update and encouraged other delegations to take analogous streamlining measures.

7. The following modifications were to be noted: in the third preambular paragraph, the text following the words "paragraph 39, 40 and 41" should be deleted; in the sixth preambular paragraph, the words "which have achieved or continue to maintain the goal of gender balance" should be replaced with the words "in achieving or maintaining the goal of gender balance"; the seventh and ninth preambular paragraphs should be reformulated to read "Expressing particular concern that for the second consecutive year there was a slowing of progress toward achieving the target of 50/50 and that between 1998 than 2003 there has been almost no progress in the rate of representation of women in appointments of one year or more at the professional and higher levels"; the eighth preambular paragraph should be deleted; in the (English text of the) tenth preambular paragraph, the word "female" should be inserted between the words "one" and "special" and the words "that is a woman" deleted; the eleventh preambular paragraph should be deleted; in the second operative paragraph, the words "near future" should be replaced with the words "very near future"; in the fourth operative paragraph, the word "staff", occurring twice, should each time be replaced with the words "professional staff", the words "and the

executive heads of the organizations of the United Nations system" should be inserted after the words "Secretary-General" and the word "his" should be replaced with the word "their"; in (the English text of) sub-paragraph (g) of the fifth operative paragraph, the words "of a project" following the word "Management" should be moved and they should follow the word "formulation"; in (the English text of) sub-paragraph (h) of the fifth operative paragraph, the words "research-based" should be inserted before the word "analysis"; in (the English text of) operative paragraph seven, the text following the words "high-level positions" should be moved and they should follow the words "Secretary-General". Furthermore, some footnotes had been deleted.

8. **The Chairman** announced that the following countries had become co-sponsors of the draft resolution: Austria, Bangladesh, Bolivia, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Central African Republic, Ghana, Greece, Haiti, Jamaica, Morocco, Mozambique, Nigeria, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Sierra Leone, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

Draft resolution A/C.3/58/L.22: Elimination of all forms of violence against women

9. **Mr. Derrek** (Netherlands), introducing draft resolution A/C.3/58/L.22 on behalf of the co-sponsors, said that the problem of violence against women had been examined by many bodies and conferences, such as the General Assembly of the United Nations, the Fourth World Conference on Women and the Commission on Human Rights.

10. Always actively participating in combating that type of violence, the Netherlands Government had brought before the General Assembly many relevant draft resolutions, concerning particularly traditional practices affecting the health of women and girls. The draft resolution currently examined built upon an existing consensus on the problem and dealt with various forms of violence, such as crimes in the name of honour, domestic violence, sexual harassment, women and armed conflict and early and forced marriages. In Europe, the proportion of women having experienced some form of domestic violence and sexual harassment in the workplace was estimated respectively at 20-50 percent and 45-81 percent. The draft resolution went beyond usual listings: it outlined specific measures that the States should take in order to eliminate all forms of violence against women. Moreover, the Secretariat of the United Nations was requested to carry out an in-depth study of violence against women in all its forms and manifestations. In particular, the study should include a statistical overview of the various forms of violence against women, detecting gaps in data collection; outline the causes and consequences of violence; and identify best practices and effective remedies.

11. The international community had to show resolve in working towards the elimination of all forms of violence against women. To that purpose, all delegations were encouraged to show flexibility and a spirit of consensus.

12. The speaker noted that the following countries had become co-sponsors of the draft resolution: Bulgaria, Central African Republic Iceland, Kazakhstan, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Ukraine and Venezuela.

13. **The Chairman** announced that the Dominican Republic, Estonia, Liechtenstein and Madagascar had become co-sponsors of the draft resolution.

Agenda item 113: Promotion and protection of the rights of children *(continued)* (A/C.3/58/L.23 and L.24)

Draft resolution A/C.3/58/L.23: Importance of the role of parents in the care, development and well-being of their children

14. **Ms. Elisha** (Benin) explained the circumstances that had led to the introduction of the draft resolution under agenda item 113. The Beninese delegation had chosen to introduce that draft resolution under agenda item 106 and had deposited the document in time accordingly, both in hard-copy and in electronic form (on diskettes). The Secretariat had perhaps made a mistake about the character of the document and the draft resolution had been presented under a agenda item 113. As a result, because of the Secretariat's error, the Beninese delegation had no choice other than introducing the draft resolution under agenda item 113 but planned to present it under the appropriate agenda item at the next session.

15. Introducing the draft resolution, the speaker said that, although the Convention on the Rights of the Child was the most ratified Convention produced by the United Nations, its implementation remained difficult in some countries. As a result, too many

children had become street children, child soldiers, child offenders or children addicted to drugs.

16. In African countries, those problems persisted mainly because of poverty, illiteracy and the absence of a legal framework. In countries with no extreme poverty, parents faced modernization- and globalization-related challenges which led to family disintegration and re-composition. The parents' most difficult current task consisted in raising their children the way they wished. There were three main aspects of parenting: care, focusing on the well-being of the child; control, primarily setting behavioural boundaries; and development, endeavouring to offer children the best prospects of developing their talents.

17. The draft resolution referred to the difficulties faced by parents and children and the measures taken at various levels to identify solutions; encouraged parents to become more involved in their children's life; and took account of the viewpoints expressed by the delegations, prompting them to participate actively in the negotiations to reach a consensus.

18. The following countries were co-sponsors of the draft resolution: Afghanistan, Algeria, Azerbaijan, Benin, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cape Verde, Central African Republic, China, Congo, Côte d'Ivoire, Dominican Republic, Gabon, Guinea, Malawi, Niger, Nigeria, Pakistan and Senegal.

19. **The Chairman** announced that Cameroon, Dominica, Eritrea, Haiti, Madagascar, Qatar and Sierra Leone had become co-sponsors of the draft resolution.

Draft resolution A/C.3/58/L.24: The situation of and assistance to Palestinian children

20. **Ms. Khalil** (Egypt), introducing the draft resolution on behalf of the sponsors listed in the document, said that the continued deterioration of the situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, affected the entire Palestinian society, and in particular the Palestinian children. Since 28 September 2000, 600 Palestinian children had been killed and thousands injured, many seriously. The gravity of the situation had prompted the introduction of the draft resolution, identical to the one adopted in 2002, save for two words that had been added to that earlier text: in the fifth preambular paragraph, the word "continued" had been inserted before the words "grave deterioration"; and in the seventh preambular paragraph the word "severe" had been inserted before the word "consequences".

21. The draft resolution expressed inter alia the General Assembly's concern that the Palestinian children under Israeli occupation remained deprived of many basic rights under the Convention on the Rights of the Child; condemned all acts of violence, resulting in extensive loss of human life and injuries, including among Palestinian children; and called upon the international community to provide urgently needed assistance and services in an effort to alleviate the dire humanitarian crisis faced by Palestinian children.

22. The speaker said that the following States had become co-sponsors of the draft resolution: Djibouti, Jordan, Kuwait, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Morocco, United Arab Emirates and Yemen.

23. The adoption of the draft resolution by consensus would contribute to attenuating the hardships suffered by Palestinian children and to providing them with direly needed assistance and protection.

24. **The Chairman** announced that the following States had become co-sponsors of the draft resolution: Algeria, Bangladesh, Cuba, Indonesia, Malaysia, Namibia, Nigeria, Oman, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, South Africa and Sudan.

25. **Mr. De Barros** (Secretary of the Committee) reminded the delegations that a document with instructions regarding the presentation of draft resolutions had been distributed to them many times. Delegations not in possession of that document should obtain a copy from the Secretariat to avoid future misunderstandings.

26. **Mr. Maquieira** (Chile), speaking on agenda item 115 (b), said that the adoption of the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action had enabled his country to renew earlier commitments to combating racial discrimination.

27. Since the return of democracy in 1990, Chile had endeavoured, through strategies combining macroeconomic and social policies, to improve the living conditions of the population by promoting economic growth beneficial to all.

28. It sought to ensure that its citizens lived in dignity and had equal opportunities. Under the strategy implemented, social benefits had been strengthened and education, health, housing and access to justice

promoted. Specific policies had been formulated to provide assistance to the population considered most vulnerable (on the basis of income, age, gender, physical or mental health and ethnic origin).

29. Minorities should be protected by combating exclusion. The General Secretariat of the Chilean Government had therefore launched in 2000 a programme promoting tolerance and non-discrimination through activities carried out by bodies representing the interests of various groups facing discrimination. There were provisions for integrating citizen requests and proposals into programme policies, protecting diversity and applying the constitutional principles of equality and non-discrimination.

30. An inter-ministerial network and a network of citizens consisting of representatives of organizations dealing with discrimination (on the basis of ethnic origin, religion, gender or status) had cooperated in formulating a national plan to combat discrimination, strengthen democratic and participatory procedures and promote tolerance and non-discrimination in Chile.

31. Combating racism and intolerance efficiently required identifying and analyzing the methods most conducive to attaining the goals set at Durban and Chile planned to address that issue within the Working Group of the Commission on Human Rights, which it chaired.

32. **Mr. Talbot** (Guyana), speaking on sub-paragraphs (a) and (b) of agenda item 115, said that the interim report of the Special Rapporteur on Contemporary Forms of Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance (A/58/313) provided welcome insights into the global community's quest to eliminate the scourge of racism and racial discrimination.

33. Almost four decades after independence, Guyana, a multi-ethnic State, continued to struggle to remove colonial vestiges of racial discrimination. Yet, the country's political activities and socio-economic fortunes had been shaped by the interaction of its two dominant ethnic groups.

34. Convinced that racism and racial discrimination obstructed sustainable development, Guyana endeavoured to combat those scourges. Its national motto, "One People, One Nation, One Destiny", expressed eloquently its long-standing conviction that the attainment of national development goals was contingent upon the full participation of people, regardless of race, ethnic origin, religion or gender. That fundamental right was set out in the Charter of the United Nations, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and many resolutions of the United Nations.

35. The Government of Guyana continued to build the basis for equal participation of all its citizens in the development process. To improve the living conditions of its population, it strove to combat discrimination, ensure even-handedness in the provision of governmental and other services, and foster a culture of mutual respect in the face of difference.

36. In the political sphere, the institutionalisation of mechanisms that enhanced cooperation for better governance at the national level had dispelled distrust between the main political and ethnic groups and led to the signing by the President of the Republic and the leader of the main opposition party on 16 May 2003 of a cooperation communiqué revitalizing the system of dialogue. Guyana's commitment to those measures bore testimony to its resolve to overcome racism in all areas of public life, offered promising prospects for the quality of life of its citizens and could provide an example for other countries and regions with similar challenges.

37. Endeavours to strengthened the legal framework for the protection of rights and recourse to legal remedies in instances of discrimination in employment had been buttressed with the operationalization of an Ethnic Relations Commission, an independent body in which all main sectors of society were represented and which had the powers of sanction in instances of race- or ethnicity-related discrimination.

38. Mr. Doudou Diène, Special Rapporteur, during his visit to the Caribbean Region in July 2003, had been able to assess the realities of ethnic relations in Guyana and the initiatives of the Government in relation to those issues and he had reflected those elements in his thorough, insightful and objective interim report.

39. The contemporary forms of racism and racial discrimination underscored by the Special Rapporteur, who had also pointed out the twofold threat of the extensive use of new information technologies in promoting virulent forms of racism and the increased incidence of racism in sports, were an object of concern. That threat endangered directly the efforts of the global community to combat racial discrimination;

and was of heightened significance to developing countries for two reasons: their limited capacity to mount effective responses to the enormous potential of advanced information technology to disseminate hate messages, and the fact that the increased incidence of racial discrimination in sports could diminishing the value of one of the international community's foremost mechanisms for fostering harmonious relations across racial and ethnic barriers.

40. The delegation of Guyana therefore urged the General Assembly to decide in favour of a timely and comprehensive response to ensure the reversal of those unwelcome trends. The international community should do more together to combat discrimination in all its forms and to implement the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action with a view to accelerating its elimination. Accordingly, the delegation of Guyana applauded the work of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and stressed that strengthening the capacity of developing countries to honour their obligations would contribute significantly to the attainment of objectives common to the entire international community.

41. **Mrs. Rasheed** (Observer for Palestine), speaking on agenda item 115, stated that racism and racial discrimination continued to obstruct the right of individuals and groups to enjoy the full potential of their society. The General Assembly of the United Nations had adopted several conventions and resolutions addressing the negative effects of racism and racial discrimination but, although there had been significant strides, much remained to be done.

42. In the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, approximately half of the Palestinian people, who totalled three and a half-million, had been living under brutal Israeli occupation for more than three decades contrary to all principles of equality, democracy and tolerance. Israel's racist attitudes underpinned oppressive measures against the Palestinian people, such as closures and restrictions on the movement of Palestinians and other forms of collective punishment. Over 2,600 Palestinians had been killed and more than 40,000 injured as a result of war crimes, State terrorism and systematic violation of fundamental rights, of which the Palestinians had been victims over the preceding three years.

43. Israel, the occupying power, had transformed occupation into a colonial phenomenon with the transfer of over 400,000 illegal Israeli settlers to land forcibly confiscated from the Palestinian people. Like any other form of colonialism, settler colonialism was rooted in racism and racial discrimination and negated the most basic rights of the indigenous people, their national rights and even their very existence.

44. In defiance of international law and the United Nations resolutions, Israel had prevented four million Palestinian refugees, uprooted from their homes and properties in 1948, from returning to their land, practicing a blatant discrimination based solely on religion. For years, hundreds of thousands of Palestinians had not been able to obtain passports or travel abroad and were forced to remain in destitute living conditions.

45. In Israel itself, more than one million Israeli Arabs or Israelis of Palestinian origin continued to suffer institutionalized discrimination and to be denied many of their individual rights. Many were prevented from returning to their property or purchasing new land. In Israel, Palestinians lived in conditions drastically lower than those of average Israeli citizens and were largely deprived of benefits, privileges and public services provided by the Government and municipal bodies. Almost 50 percent of children living below the poverty line in Israel were Israelis of Palestinian origin, although that group did not account for more than 20 percent of Israel's population. Israel had no constitution and was the only country in the world that differentiated between citizenship and nationality.

46. The Palestinian delegation hoped that the international community would exert all efforts to provide relief to the Palestinian people. That would be possible only when the occupation and colonization of Palestinian land were brought to an end. The rights of Palestinian refugees should be restored and the Israeli Arabs and the Israelis of Palestinian origin should be spared institutionalized discrimination. Most importantly, a Palestinian state with East Jerusalem as its capital should be established to enable the Palestinian people to live in a world respectful of their dignity and of the ideas of equality, freedom and tolerance.

47. **Mr. Hatta** (Indonesia), speaking on agenda items 115 and 116, expressed appreciation for the Secretary-General's reports under those items and said that her delegation associated itself with the statement made by

the representative of Morocco on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.

48. Indonesia, a multicultural and multiethnic society particularly sensitive to the problem of racism, felt revulsion at discrimination. As far back as 1999, it had become a party to the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination and adopted a national plan of action on human rights for 1998-2003. A second national plan of action was to outline the priorities for the next five years.

49. In 2000, the Constitution had been amended to guarantee non-discrimination. In addition to ratifying the above Convention and other instruments, Indonesia had formed a standing committee in order to implement the national plan of action. The Government was reviewing all existing laws to ensure that they were not enforced in a discriminatorily against any ethnic groups, particularly members of the Indonesian community that were of Chinese origin; and would continue to take legislative, judicial, regulatory, administrative and other measures to maintain a spirit of tolerance and mutual respect among the country's diverse communities. That included anti-terrorist legislation enacted in the aftermath of the attack in Bali. Although terrorists should be brought to justice, efforts to combat terrorism must be carried out without prejudice towards any religion, ethnic group or nation.

50. The Government of Indonesia was greatly concerned, and could not tolerate, that globally racism seemed to be rising, as reflected in the report of the Special Rapporteur of the Commission on Human Rights on Contemporary Forms of Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance.

51. The long suffering of the Palestinian people, largely attributable to racism, should finally be brought to an end. Settling that conflict required Israel's full withdrawal from all occupied Arab lands; respect for the right of all States in the region to live within secure and internationally recognized boundaries; and exercise of the Palestinian people's right to self-determination, including the establishment of a Palestinian State with Al Qods Al Sharif as its capital. Israel must comply with all relevant United Nations resolutions, particularly the one adopted by the Tenth Emergency Special Session of the General Assembly on 21 October 2003, and fully implement the road map.

52. At the global and the national level, peace and prosperity could only be achieved through tolerance, respect for diversity and the participation of all people in human development.

53. **Mrs. Al Haj Ali** (Syrian Arab Republic), speaking on agenda items 115 and 116, said that her delegation associated itself with the statement made by the representative of Morocco on behalf of the Group of 77 and China under agenda item 115, and stated that the upsurge of racism, particularly against Arabs and Muslims in the aftermath of the events of 11 September 2001, was extremely worrying.

54. In view of the regrettable failure to implement the goals set at the Durban Conference, the representative of the Syrian Arab Republic expressed the hope that the efforts currently put forth by the international community to that effect would be successful.

55. The use of modern communication means and techniques to misrepresent specific cultures or religions by praising a civilization to the detriment of another was dangerous, because it aroused hatred and threatened international peace and stability. Furthermore, some countries enacted racist legislation under the pretext of counter-terrorism, thereby setting back the fight against racial discrimination.

56. The representative of the Syrian Arab Republic praised the report drawn up by Mr. Doudou Diène, Special Rapporteur of the Commission on Human Rights on Contemporary Forms of Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance (A/58/313), and his efforts in combating racism. Hopefully, that report would be duly studied by the competent bodies and a follow-up mechanism would be set up to enable civil society and non-governmental organizations (CSOs and NGOs) to ensure the implementation of the Durban Programme of Action.

57. The situation in Arab countries was deteriorating constantly and Israeli practices against the citizens of the occupied Arab territories - in particular, hate speeches by some leaders; expulsion of Arab populations; establishment of illegal Jewish settler colonies to alter the demography of the occupied territories and impose a new status quo; and construction of a separation wall disavowed by the General Assembly - aroused ever greater concern.

58. The right to self-determination was enshrined in the United Nations Charter, confirmed by many United Nations resolutions and provided for in the two International Covenants on Economic, Social and

Cultural Rights. It was regrettable that the United Nations, despite its efforts and successes in that area, had been unable to stop Israel's arbitrary and repressive measures against the Palestinian people or to ensure the implementation of the United Nations resolutions.

59. Throughout history, many victims of oppression had found refuge in Arab countries. In the Syrian Arab Republic, one of the first countries to adhere to the international conventions against apartheid, such people had been able to exercise their human rights without subjection to any discrimination.

60. Peace and security would be secured in the region only when Israeli occupation of Arab territories would cease. The Palestinian people must be able to enjoy the right to self-determination, have a national territory and set up an independent State with Al Qods al Sharif as its capital. Denial of that right to any people was unacceptable and the United Nations had a role to play on that issue. Not the struggle against Israeli occupation but the occupation itself should be described as terrorist.

61. **Mr. Neil** (Jamaica) said that his delegation associated itself with the statements made by the representative of Morocco on behalf of the Group of 77 and China and by the representative of Antigua and Barbuda on behalf of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) and stressed that, to make further progress in the elimination of racism and racial discrimination, all of the commitments made under the Durban Programme of Action should be followed up appropriately. As the end of the Third Decade to Combat Racism and Racial Discrimination was approaching, one could say that the worst abuses had been brought to an end and that, under the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, the international community had formulated a cooperative plan of action for monitoring the activities of States and to ensuring that they met their obligations. Much, however, remained to be done. Despite legislative and political advances, racism and racial discrimination persisted in certain types of behaviour, in social relations and in employment practices. Minorities were still targets of - sometimes violent - attacks, while hate groups continued to threaten society. Such groups, generally outlawed under authoritarian regimes, exercised abusively the rights and freedoms ensured by democracy, particularly the freedom of expression, and that problem required not only legislation and governmental policies but also proactive measures in each society.

62. In comments intended to complete the statements made by the aforementioned delegations, the speaker underscored three issues related to the implementation of the Durban Programme of Action. First, national efforts to strengthen the education and socialization processes should be intensified with a view to promoting the ideal of racial harmony and eradicating insidious racist doctrines - which must be monitored with utmost vigilance - in cooperation with the civil-society and non-governmental organizations (CSOs and NGOs) concerned. That combat should also target racial stereotypes plaguing some groups or communities that were constantly suspected of terrorism or criminal activities in general.

63. Secondly, attention should be paid to the issue of compensation for past injustice, referred to in paragraphs 157-159 of the Durban Programme of Action. Without opening old wounds, measures should be taken to indemnify countries that had been colonized, particularly some developing countries. The greatest hardships had been endured by peoples of African origin - victims of slavery and other forms of racial oppression - and indigenous populations. Proactive programmes, designed to enable such groups to close the gap due to their history must therefore be implemented. The aforementioned paragraphs concerned not only individual experiences of racism and its impact on personal development but also, more broadly, the collective experience of failure by entire communities that had been thwarted in their development by racism and racist institutions depriving them of possibilities that other communities had been able to explore. Haiti, a country which, while preparing to celebrate the bicentenary of its independence, direly needed the international community's assistance in removing the traces of its colonial past, was in many ways a pertinent example.

64. Thirdly, cultural diversity should be respected. In view of intensified migration flows and tightened links among peoples, harmonious relations among peoples and States presupposed increased tolerance and the acceptance of cultural pluralism. Any feeling that a particular culture was superior to another was likely to lead to intolerance and conflict. The "clash of civilizations", to which reference was sometimes made, had no place in international relations. Through a spontaneous effort to appreciate the wealth of cultural

diversity and respect all religions, inter alia, each group would contribute to the promotion of racial harmony.

65. **Mrs. Clarke** (Barbados), speaking on agenda item 115, said that her delegation associated itself with the statements made by the representative of Morocco on behalf of the group of 77 and China and by the representative of Antigua and Barbuda on behalf of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM).

66. In 1973 and again in 2001, the international community had committed itself to eradicating racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance. Yet, those goals were still far from being attained.

67. Eliminating racism clearly required a cross-sectoral and multi-dimensional approach. States should formulate a strategy to counteract both the manifestations and the conceptual underpinnings of racism. This would entail inter alia strengthening and implementing domestic and international anti-racism and anti-discrimination instruments, research to identify the cultural and historical sources of racist attitudes, education programmes to combat the legacy of racism, dialogue among ethnic groups, and fostering an environment of mutual respect and openness to support that dialogue.

68. Like most Caribbean States, Barbados had a dark colonial past. Yet, it had emerged as a society where cultural diversity was recognized and ethnic groups were encouraged to participate in the public arena.

69. The Barbadian delegation appreciated the report of the Special Rapporteur, who had carried out field missions to study inter-ethnic relations in Guyana and Trinidad and Tobago.

70. At Durban, the delegations had recognized the link between education and the struggle against racism. They had stressed that serious research must be undertaken to rewrite history books with a view to recognizing the achievements and contributions of indigenous people and people of African descent. The Centre for Multi-racial Studies, established in the Caribbean in the 1970s as a collaborative effort of the University of Sussex and the University of the West Indies, had contributed through research to shaping the Caribbean consciousness.

71. The Durban Declaration and Programme of Action had affirmed that there was a need for an international facility to identify techniques, mechanisms, policies and programmes for developing harmonious multiracial and multi-cultural societies. The University of the West Indies should be seriously considered as a possible site for an international Centre for multi-racial and multi-cultural studies.

72. The use of the Internet and other new communications media for negative purposes had become a worrying trend. Barbados supported the inclusion of strong language in the outcome documents of the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) to denounce the use of information and communication technologies for the promotion and promulgation of racist ideologies and urged the Member States and the media to guard against such abuse.

73. Racism and racial discrimination - banes that continued to be at the heart of major conflicts across the world - should be eliminated. The international community must mobilize the necessary resources and political will to promote cooperation, tolerance and harmony among the peoples of the world. The Constitution of Barbados offered protection from state-sponsored discrimination.

74. **Mr. Lewis** (Antigua and Barbuda) recalled that the principle of equal rights and self-determination of peoples, enshrined in the United Nations Charter and reaffirmed in myriad resolutions of the General Assembly, was the basic premise underpinning various human rights conventions, had been reasserted in the Millennium Declaration and remained a fundamental and inalienable human right for all peoples on the planet.

75. Adherence to that principle had enormous significance to the remaining 16, mostly small island, non-self-governing territories, all under continual review by the General Assembly. While the issue of the self-determination and subsequent decolonization of those small non-self-governing territories remained, and should continue to be, an important agenda item of the Fourth Committee, the organic link between their development process and the self-determination issues addressed in the Third Committee - where emphasis was placed on the human-rights aspects of the issue - must be constantly taken into consideration. On that point, the delegation of Antigua and Barbuda reiterated a recommendation, made to the Third Committee in 2002, to convene an informal forum on self-determination, jointly coordinated by the Third and

Fourth Committees, and suggested that the recommendation should be considered for inclusion in the text of the resolution on self-determination currently before the Third Committee.

76. Since the end of World War II, the international community had contributed to the self-determination of over 80 territories. The delegation of Antigua and Barbuda rejoiced at the ascension of Timor-Leste, which had become a Member State of the United Nations. But the process of self-determination was far from complete.

77. As the Member States of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) had emphasized in the general debate of the Fourth Committee, there were still significant impediments to the exercise of the universal right to self-determination by the people of the remaining 16 small island territories. Those obstacles were in large measure due to an information deficit which continued to exist both among the people of the territories and in the international community: information on the legitimate options of self-determination available to the people of those territories remained woefully insufficient, while the Member States were not provided with the analysis of the situation on the ground necessary to make informed decisions to bridge the democratic deficit inherent in even the most benevolent of contemporary colonial governance models.

78. Despite General Assembly decisions on the first and the - current - second International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism, much remained to be done to ensure the implementation of that plan of action. The United Nations mandate on self-determination and decolonization could be carried out only through a concerted focus on implementing the important recommendations contained in the Organization's resolutions and decisions.

79. The delegation of Antigua and Barbuda acknowledged and endorsed the collective views of the Heads of State or Government of the Non-Aligned Movement, meeting in Kuala Lumpur in February 2003, who had renewed their commitment to hasten the complete elimination of colonialism and who supported the effective implementation of the Plan of action for the Second International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism.

80. The United Nations system should ensure that the necessary resources were made available to carry out the General Assembly mandates on self-determination and decolonisation and give the Plan of Action for the Second International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism a chance to succeed. Only through the implementation of those clear mandates could the process of self-determination be successfully concluded and the concomitant decolonization effectively achieved.

81. In closing, the speaker recalled observations by some eminent statesmen of the past on self-determination and stated that the promise of political equality for all - even for the people living in small island territories - should be addressed with the same vigour and resources that had ensured the success of that historic process in other territories.

Statements in exercise of the right to reply

82. **Mr. Luria** (Israel) expressed his delegation's deep disappointment at the hate speech delivered the day before by the representative of Egypt, a friendly State that had signed a peace treaty with Israel.

83. The Israeli delegation urged the Palestinians and their supporters to take a close look around and see the nations that had achieved self-determination without resorting to destruction or to denial of the rights of others. Self-determination, a noble idea, was debased when its exercise denied the same right to other people.

84. Like any other State, Israel would not succumb to violence or alter its policy as a consequence of terrorism. As a democracy, Israel had no desire to control the lives or the future of the Palestinians.

85. Since 1993, Israel had made extensive territorial concessions to the Palestinians and had always been willing to accept great sacrifices for the sake of peace. Furthermore, it had accepted the roadmap, which called for a two-State solution.

86. The Palestinians' refusal to abandon terrorism, however, had once again failed the many hopes in a renewal of the peace process. It was difficult to comprehend their reasons for rejecting the sweeping peace-offer which had been made at the peace summit held in Camp David in 2000 and had given them virtually all that they had been demanding.

87. Because of the ongoing Palestinian terrorism, many Israelis doubted whether the Palestinians were truly interested in peace and whether the concessions

that Israel had been prepared to make three years earlier were still possible.

88. Israel would not compromise on the safety of its citizens. If the Palestinian leadership took the moral and strategic decision to abandon terrorism once and for all, they would find Israel more than willing to accept painful compromises in order to make the vision of the roadmap a reality for both Israelis and Palestinians.

89. **Mr. Roshdy** (Egypt) argued that the peace agreement between Egypt and Israel gave Egypt the right to comment on the way Israel had been implementing peace agreements in the last 15 years or so, and invited the representative of Israel to look around in his turn and, among the States that sat on the Third Committee and had gained their independence, count those that had been subjected by a foreign occupier to such inhuman measures as those practiced by the Israeli Government in the Occupied Palestinian Territory.

90. Despite multiple resolutions adopted every year by the General Assembly and condemning Israeli practices in the Occupied Palestinian Territory - most recently the construction of what Israel called a "security wall" -, Israel refused to change anything in its policies.

91. Over the previous three years, 2,700 Palestinians had been killed, including about 600 children. On 14 September 2003, a four-month-old girl had been - not killed but - executed by the Israeli army as part of ensuring Israel's security. Children, however, could never be of any threat to the security of Israel. Moreover, a people standing on its own land and fighting those who were trying to seize it could not be accused of terrorism.

92. The Third Committee was dealing with human-rights issues: it was therefore incumbent upon it to tell Israel that they were wrong - even if Israel did not care. One could wonder until when they would feel or believe that they could deceive the international community and continue to take care of their security as if nobody else existed on the planet, as if all people had come to this life just to protect the security of Israel.

93. **Ms. Rasheed** (Observer for Palestine) stated that the statement of the representative of Israel was full of misrepresentation and distortion and she would address it in one of the coming sessions.

The meeting rose at 12.15 p.m.